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Dear Distinguished Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding my support for funding Senate Bill 1226, An Act Establishing A Fall Prevention Program. As an evaluator of fall prevention programming at the University of Connecticut Center on Aging, I am here today to communicate two points related to this important public health issue.

1. During the last several years, I have served as part of the team at UConn to evaluate the results of the CCFP program. The collaboration between the program developers at Yale and the evaluators at UCONN has provided an excellent opportunity to combine resources from both institutions. We've established an effective and efficient means of collaborating between investigators at UCONN and Yale, and with clinical and social services agencies in the greater Hartford region. Our group has published a number of papers that are serving as a model for the rest of the country.
2. As a researcher who has been working with the data from the project, I have seen firsthand that the older adults have learned valuable health information. They have reported that they are now more mindful of their surroundings, and they have made behavioral changes to decrease their risk for falling, specifically changes regarding footwear, environmental hazards, medications, and postural hypotension. They have reported positive experiences with the project and have identified the positive impact that the project has had on their lives. For example, during focus group discussions with senior center members at the Perlas Hispanic Senior Center and the North End Senior Center, senior center members described the benefits of the program:

*Once I learned the exercises I've learned how to better walk on the stairs and now I don't fall. And as a result...I feel better, I feel stronger.  
(Excerpt from Perlas Hispanic Senior Center transcript, page 2).*

*[The nurse would] tell me how to try to balance myself and exercise, she gave us an exercise sheet to try to do it every day, and just be aware of your surroundings in terms of falling, watch where you walk, and the lighting and all of the different things. I think I pretty much know everything about falling now or slipping.  
(Excerpt from North End Senior Center transcript, page 13).*

The health education (provided by CCFP) is changing the practices of older adults and those who care for them. Thank you again for the opportunity to explain our work and for your consideration of appropriating resources to Senate Bill 1226. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or provide further information to assist with your deliberations.